

## Accommodating Special Dietary Needs Maine Child Nutrition Programs

### Participants with a Disability

Federal regulations **require** sponsors participating in child nutrition programs to make reasonable substitutions to the federal meal requirements for participants **with a disability** which restricts their diet.

This is determined by a **licensed physician** (MD or DO). The physician's determination of the participant's disability must be based on the regulatory criteria for a "disabled person." (7 CFR 15(b)(3))

A participant whose disability restricts his or her diet shall be provided meals substitutions when supported by a **medical statement signed by a licensed physician**. The medical statement shall identify:

1. The participant's major life activity or bodily function affected by the disability;
2. An explanation of what needs to be done to make the accommodation;
3. The food or foods to be omitted from the participant's diet, or other dietary accommodations that need to be made; and,
4. The food(s) that must be substituted.

If the disability would require caloric modifications, meal pattern or frequency modifications, or the substitution of a liquid nutritive formula, this information must be included on the medical statement.

### Participants without a Disability

A sponsor may, **at their discretion**, make substitutions for individual participants who **do not have a disability** but choose not to consume a food item(s).

In most cases, the dietary needs of participants without a disability can be met through traditional program meal service. To be eligible for meal reimbursement, the accommodation must meet meal pattern regulations.

### Milk Substitutions for Participants without a Disability

A sponsor may, **at their discretion**, make substitutions for participants without a disability who request a substitution for cow's milk. The substitution **must be nutritionally equivalent to cow's milk**. *Juice and water are NOT allowable substitutions*. Participants must provide the sponsor with a signed milk substitution request from a parent/guardian or recognized medical authority.

#### Milk Substitute Nutrition Standards

Nutrient	Per Cup
Calcium	276 mg
Protein	8 g
Vitamin A	500 IU
Vitamin D	100 IU
Magnesium	24 mg
Phosphorus	222 mg
Potassium	349 mg
Riboflavin	.44 mg
Vitamin B-12	1.1 mcg

### USDA Meal Reimbursement

Reimbursement for meals served to participants with a disability or participants with other special dietary needs are paid at the standard meal reimbursement rate. While any additional costs for substituted foods are considered allowable program costs, no additional Child Nutrition Program reimbursement is available. Sources of supplemental funding may include special education funds (if the substituted food is specified in the student's individualized education program), the general account of the school district, or the nonprofit school foodservice account.

### Participant Meal Charges

There can be **no** additional charges to participants with or without disabilities for meal substitutions.

### Communication & Documentation

Communication between the sponsor, student, and the parent/guardian is key to ensure reasonable accommodations are made for participants with disabilities. This includes balancing the safety of the student with inclusion when considering "allergy-free" seating arrangements.

Keep all documentation on file including the medical statement and notes from conversations.